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produced a considerable mass of original polemic writing. Still fewer pamphlets were occasioned by the rebellion of 1714, and Catalan prose at last declined to the level of the almost extinct poetical literature. When the Romantic revival appeared, it was the composition in verse which profited by the zeal of the regenerated patriots, while prose struggled to its feet again as best it might. Its first manifestations, in historical novels of the Walter Scott variety, were not particularly successful. Later its delineations in fiction of contemporary manners have met with more favor, and such leading periodicals as *L'Avenç* are granting to prose literature a gradually increasing space. It is the desire and advice of Morel-Fatio that the rising generation of Catalonians devote more of its energies to this branch of composition, and by taking as its standard the language and style of the old chronicles restore again the glory of their ancestral literature.

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FRENCH LANGUAGE.

An Introduction to the French Language.

Being a practical Grammar with Exercises.

By ALPHONSE N. VAN DAELL, Professor in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Boston, U. S. A.: Ginn & Co., 8vo, pp. xxvii, 305.

It is generally accepted, I think, that as to books of this kind, it is better to postpone judgment of their merits and demerits, until they have been thoroughly tested in the classroom. I have used this book during the present year at Harvard, with a beginners class numbering one hundred and fifty men, coming from all kinds of academies, high-schools, colleges and universities. Some of the men came directly to Harvard; some had been to school until they reached their fifteenth year and then went into business for several years. During six months previously to their coming to college, they took up their books and acquired a sufficient amount of book-knowledge to pass the entrance examinations; some came as special students and were admitted without examinations; others still had been principals

of academies and other schools, or professors in mathematics and sciences or in the classic languages in schools, colleges and universities—in short, a motley crowd of men of different moulds and various ages that came to graduate from Harvard, and to this end had to, or wanted to study French. With six exceptions out of the whole number, none had ever opened a French book. In general they were men eager to learn. We finished our work with this book some time ago; the result was gratifying all round, and in a large measure I agree with my students in tracing the direct cause of this satisfaction to the excellent method of this work. It is, however, my personal opinion that this book is best adapted for the use of beginners who are somewhat advanced in general principles of language structure; otherwise the use of it is not so hard a task on the student as it is on the teacher, who must in such cases elucidate these principles at great length. I speak from experience.

The valuable system of selecting choice passages from well-known authors gives one confidence that one is studying the purest French. These selections and the bits of poetry following each lesson, are so well chosen in point of interest and style, that the work has an instructive literary value which quite surpasses that of any introductory book that I have seen in any other language. The themes cover an unusually wide scope of idiom and usage; the short but complete grammar in the last part makes the book a model of convenience.

I do not think, however, that the student is sufficiently guided in the preparation of the themes, and for this reason the work in its present form seems hardly well adapted to scholars in the ordinary grades of preparatory schools. I prepared every part of the lessons as any ordinary student, to know beforehand in what manner I could best serve the interests of my students; and in this way I became convinced that the grammar references in each lesson would be inadequate, if the student were expected to prepare all the work by himself; for, in the first part of the lessons, he must search out and adapt rules from the grammar long before any reference is made to them in

the lessons; otherwise the preparation of the lessons would be a blind and discouraging exercise for the inexperienced pupil. On the other hand, in the preparation of many of the lessons, the student is obliged to use constantly a dictionary, and even then cannot in every case find a clue to certain details of idiom, or sometimes to the structure of an entire sentence. For such cases, helpful suggestions should have been put either in foot-notes, or in the vocabulary.

As to pronunciation, I entirely agree with Prof. van Daell in what he says in the Preface. There are many typographical errors in this first edition, a few places where the English wording may be slightly improved, and a *lapsus calami* in two or three places in the grammar; these will be corrected in the revised edition which, I understand, will appear shortly and, therefore, I do not think it necessary to call special attention to them in these columns. Formerly we used Chardenal's 'French Course' for Freshmen French at Harvard. What did I gain by changing to the work under discussion? In the first place, the men in this year's course received a stronger discipline in the study of French Grammar from the beginning; in the second place, we shall have read, by May 30, from one thousand three hundred to one thousand four hundred pages of French, whilst during the academic year 1892-93 we read from five hundred to six hundred and fifty pages only; this result I attribute, in a measure, to Prof. van Daell's excellent and helpful book.

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COMPARATIVE GRAMMAR.

Précis de Grammaire Comparée de l'Anglais et de l'Allemand rapportés à leur commune origine et rapprochés des langues classiques, par VICTOR HENRY. Paris: Hachette et Cie, 1893. 8vo, pp. xix, 418.

VICTOR HENRY'S new publication, a comparative grammar of the English and German languages, is in every respect an exact counterpart of his well-known 'Précis de Grammaire Comparée du Grec et du Latin,' which has proved its *raison d'être* by its appearance in a

fourth edition (1892). Even the prefaces of the two books exhibit a strong similarity of views, showing that the author's experiences have corroborated the soundness of his plan. All modern language teachers that are striving to raise their vocation above the plane of dilettanteism and mere *Sprachmeisterei* will gladly endorse what he says about the purpose of his book:

"Le moment est venu d'essayer, dans l'enseignement supérieur des langues vivantes, la direction historique et scientifique qui a quelque peu rajeuni l'agrégation des classes de grammaire, de mettre nos futurs professeurs en mesure de suivre, s'il leur en prend goût, le grand mouvement linguistique qui comptera un jour parmi les plus méritoires efforts de ce siècle, ou, plus simplement, d'offrir à ceux qui connaissent à la fois l'anglais et l'allemand les éléments d'une méthode comparative, etc."

But I fear his enthusiasm is carrying him too far in hoping

"Que ceux qui l'auront sérieusement étudiée y pourront trouver aussi les rudiments des anciens idiomes et s'en servir pour traduire, sans autre étude préalable et sans autre secours que celui d'un simple lexique approprié, quelques textes faciles de moyen-anglais ou de moyen-allemand, de vieux-haut-allemand ou d'anglo-saxon, voire de gotique ou de bas-allemand."

The opposite way would certainly lead to more satisfactory results and would facilitate the ready comprehension of the trend of philological argumentation. A knowledge of the classical languages may to some extent take the place of a special study of the oldest Germanic dialects, but an acquaintance with the elements of Gothic is the lowest requirement for students that enter on the historical study of English or German, even if provided with such an excellent guide as Prof. Henry's book. Aside from this objection, which experience with the 'Précis' may decide, such a course is advisable from the standpoint of pedagogical economy: the student will save much time and mental labor by first acquainting himself with the forms, at least, of the older dialects. The encouragement given to students whose preparation ought hardly to suggest to them the existence of a science of language, and the assurance "qu'on peut s'y orienter sans avoir appris ni le sanscrit ni le grec ni même le latin"